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UNCLAS TEGUCIGALPA 002882

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR WHA/CEN, INL/LP, AND DRL/PHD

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SUBJECT: ANTI-CORRUPTION PROSECUTOR IN SAN PEDRO SULA
ARRESTED FOR ALLEGED LINKS TO ORGANIZED CRIME

1. (U) On December 1, Ruben Adolfo Reyes, a prosecutor in a unit designed to combat corruption in San Pedro Sula was arrested by Honduran authorities for his alleged links to organized crime. Reyes, who works for the "Common Crime" unit of the Public Ministry in San Pedro Sula, was arraigned on charges of falsifying public documents and grand theft auto. Amazingly, eleven months ago the court of justice in Tegucigalpa issued the arrest warrant for Reyes, but it was not until last week that they "realized" he had been working as a prosecutor in San Pedro Sula. The arrest warrant for Reyes was issued on January 3, 2003, more than five months before he accepted the position of prosecutor on May 14.

2. (U) According to the press reports, in March of this year, when the selection process for the position as prosecutor began, the institution responsible for checking his criminal background, the Criminal Investigative Police (DGIC), relayed to the Public Ministry that Reyes had no previous criminal record. (Note: The Miami Herald reported that Reyes' position was that of the chief of the government anti-corruption office in northern Honduras, which is not correct. End Note.) Officials are downplaying this situation as merely a lack of coordination among institutions, and classifying it as a "processing error."

3. (SBU) Comment: This error made by DGIC at the minimum demonstrates gross negligence and, in the worst case scenario, suggests that someone within the organization knowingly turned a blind eye when performing Reyes' background check. It is possible that Reyes' arrest is not merely a timely coincidence, but rather the result of Reyes agitating other corrupt officials that thought it better he be removed. End Comment.
Pierce